

## **Marketing & Events Committee Meeting Notes**

**January 25, 2019 ~ 8:30 a.m.**

**Meeting Location: Commerce One, Room A ~ 901 Saginaw St.**

Members Attending: Becky Hortop, Michelle Judd, Tyler King, Christine Schwall, Mike Murray, Andrew Heppner, Laura Horwath

Absent: Valerie Allen, Peggy Rau

Also Attending: Mike Bacigalupo, Matthew Kowalski, Suzanne Maxwell

### **Public Input**

Murray reflected on Lifestyle & Wellness Weekend on January 11 and 12, says it went well with many enthusiastic visitors wanting to see more. Heppner responded that he saw his regular traffic. Horwath expanded that being a different event than in previous years, people liked seeing something new. Horwath saw a good amount of foot traffic and attributes it to good weather. Judd said the staff at the Bay City Antique Center had fun and saw good foot traffic. Judd suggested that we spend more time next year educating the public on what exactly to expect from the event.

### **2019 Calendar of Events**

Judd discussed having appropriate timetable for stores like G.T. Homestead, My Secret Garden, Little House, Violet's Blue, etc. to set up for the Holiday Open House since the first week of November comes the day after Halloween in 2019. As a representative of My Secret Garden, King believes pushing the event back to the following weekend will give ample time for businesses to update and coordinate for the new holiday. (Edit: Holiday Open House will be November 1-3 per request of anchor businesses)

Maxwell asks the committee for input and interest level for a 5K fun run in Downtown Bay City for the 2019 calendar year. Bacigalupo explains that there will be repairs going on at the park during proposed date. Horwath emphasizes the costs involved with running a race: bibs, timers, etc. and wonders of logistics. Bacigalupo suggests tabling the race for next year to allow time to properly assess and coordinate the event. The committee resoundingly agreed.

Horwath expressed interest in creating a more adult-themed Halloween event in Downtown Bay City in addition to Treats and Treasures, suggesting another possible beer garden after its success in 2018. The board agrees this could be a welcomed addition, and Maxwell emphasized that additional events can be added after the calendar is finalized.

Hortop expressed an interest in making available "co-hosting" events on the Downtown Bay City Facebook page. Horwath echoed this by explaining merchants can send requests, but believes this is something we should definitely implement. Hortop requested invites be sent out to participants of the Downtown Chili Cook-Off to being the cross-marketing.

Maxwell discussed Santa's Arrival event for 2019. She expressed interest in making this event larger than it currently is, citing that carriage rides go until 11pm, streets are already closed, and we have a large audience already in attendance. Suggestions to make this a "block party" of sorts with food trucks, beer tents, igloos, etc., is presented to the committee in hopes to grow the event's popularity.

Bacigalupo expressed a desire to obtain the Delta College Planetarium for a space for children to meet with Santa, as has been done in years past. If not there, possibly a large tent in a centrally located area, as the Nickless Family Community Pavilion concession area was jam packed this year and could use new suggestions.

Judd is interested in what made the 2018 Santa's Arrival event such a success. Bacigalupo attributes 2018 success to the availability of ice skating for the first time at the Nickless Family Community Pavilion, as well as strong marketing efforts from Downtown Bay City through social media channels and e-mail. Judd suggests creating additional family-centered events to accompany what is already in place to grow the event. Heppner tells of future plans to host another Beer Garden in Unity Park, possibly during the Santa's Arrival event to offer even more happenings that night.

### **New Years Eve Celebration in Wenonah Park**

Heppner explains to the committee a shared vision between himself and Bacigalupo for the New Years Eve celebration in Wenonah Park. This would be a family-friendly event with hopes to have a three-sided tent with high-top tables and chairs near the band shell. Heppner suggests including the three igloos that were a hit at the Beer Garden events in Unity Park in December 2018, possibly having additional igloos for more to enjoy. Heppner expressed a desire to have food trucks available for dining on location of the event, and would like to reach out to Fabiano Brothers, Polish Pyros, and Lightnin Licks Vinyl Preservation Society for helping with entertainment.

Bacigalupo explains that he reached out the local restaurant owners in the Downtown Bay City and received feedback that this event would not bother or hinder their respective New Years Eve plans. Bacigalupo also stated he will be contacting the Polish Pyros soon to get a quote on a small fireworks display during the event. Heppner expressed a desire to have use of the Downtown Management Boards liquor license for the New Years Eve event. Bacigalupo said he will put it up for approval by the board at the February DMB meeting.

Judd suggests coming up with a catchy name for the event. Heppner expands by saying we should have lots of swag (giveaways) for attendees that bear the branding of the event to build reputation. Maxwell noted that the committee all take part in researching these type of events, as well as branding and coordinating all of the details. A subcommittee of Bacigalupo, Heppner, and Horwath will champion this event with input and approval from the Marketing & Events Committee.

### **DMB Subcommittees - Volunteers**

Maxwell explains at the last Downtown Management Board meeting the board began forming a subcommittee for a Downtown Beautification effort. This would include possible contests or incentives for business owners keeping their "front porch" looking

great. Maxwell says Downtown no longer does the "Adopt a Pot" program, but beautification efforts need to be addressed. Barb Engelhardt-Carter and Sara Dimitroff have volunteered to be part of the subcommittee and are seeking additional members. Judd echoes the sentiment of keeping Downtown Bay City beautiful throughout. Horwath suggests reaching out to someone from the Times Properties, as their properties look great year round. Judd expands by suggesting reaching out to candidates that already do a great job with beautification with their properties, citing Rick at G.T. Homestead and Deb Edmonds. Horwath suggests touching base with Brandon Strong from the YWCA for tips and direction, as decorating is a forte for him. Heppner explains that Villiage Chocolatier has done an excellent job of creating a visually appealing storefront since they've opened in Downtown Bay City.

Maxwell discussed a DMB initiative of merchant interviews by board members of the DMB and DDA. The plan is to pair up members to go into businesses and interview/meet with them. This would help put a face to the boards and to help merchants understand the benefits of having a Downtown Management Board and Development Authority. Members would receive information on possibly concerns or improvements, record the findings and report it to the board to progress moving forward. Judd explains this is more of a Downtown ambassador role and the more participation we can get, the less businesses each pairing would have to go to. Hortop expressed interest in joining the merchant interview efforts. Judd suggests having materials that can be left with the merchants to remember main points and some kind of takeaway. Maxwell shares plans to include contacts, calendars, as well as explaining what exactly the Downtown Management Board is. Murray expressed interest in helping as well, but admits his availability may be limited. King asked to be included in the initiative as well.

### **Other**

Maxwell gave an overview of the Michigan Main Street training session that is coming to the Commerce One building on Tuesday, January 29th and invites the committee to join. Maxwell explains that it takes years to make happen, but this meeting will provide great insights and well as ways to get grants and more.

Maxwell shared with the committee that the Downtown Management Board has invited Julia Dinauer to an internship opportunity as it pertains to marketing. Dinauer has expressed interest in marketing and will be shadowing Kowalski, as well as sharing ideas and helping with marketing efforts throughout Downtown Bay City. She is very excited to begin, and provides insight to the younger demographic. Dinauer will be attending some Marketing & Events Committee meetings, but not all.

Judd mentioned diving further into the details of the Downtown survey sent out in 2018. Judd would like to identify what age groups are a focus based on the analytics, as well as sort key components by demographics and asked for this to be added to the February meeting agenda.

Judd explained to the committee that she is a Marketing professor at Saginaw Valley State University and would like to have her marketing class focus on Downtown Bay City for the duration of her Winter 2019 semester. Students will be placed into small groups and will develop marketing plans, look for insights, and provide interesting

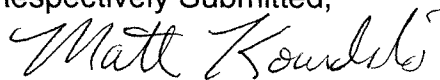
perspectives. The committee will be invited for presentations, a Q&A session, which should be valuable for the students and the DMB alike. Judd welcomes fresh eyes onto our Downtown landscape, and King likes the idea of having unbiased opinions.

Horwath expressed interest in a meeting with Shirley Roberts and Scott Ellis from the Tall Ships event to discuss ways to market the event and capture the audience. Horwath would like to create a plan which could then be sent out and involve all of the Downtown merchants for the event. Judd cited last years event had a phone app and would be interested to see if that will be available again this year. Maxwell tells that she has been and will continue to coordinate with them and will update the committee as details emerge.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:46 am.

Respectively Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matt Kowalski".

Matthew Kowalski  
Administrative/Marketing Specialist